

Right Now

Jobs, Entitlement Reform Needed Now More Than Ever

I wanted to share with you information about the recent spending reduction agreement and where I believe we should go from here. Largely due to the irresponsible overspending of the last few years, the U.S. government was on the verge of reaching the legal limit on the national debt. A failure to increase the debt limit would have raised the risk of default and resulted in higher interest rates, doing significant damage to the already weak economy and adding even more to the long-term budget deficit. Importantly, raising the debt limit did not authorize Congress to spend more money. It simply authorized the Treasury Department to pay bills that were already coming due.

While I would have preferred not to be in the position of raising the debt limit at all, given this reality, I believed Congress needed to use this occasion to cut federal spending and institute much needed budget reforms. The final agreement, signed into law by the President, reduces spending by more than \$2 trillion over ten years while establishing spending caps and requiring the House and the Senate to vote on a Balanced Budget Amendment before the end of the year. The Budget Control Act achieves two-thirds of the discretionary spending reductions in the House-passed budget, resulting in greater reductions than the initial debt limit increase. Consequently, a clear precedent has been established that any future debt limit increases must be matched by an even larger reduction in government spending. Specifically, the Budget Control Act includes \$900 billion in spending reductions and instructs a House-Senate joint committee to propose at least \$1.2 trillion in additional cuts. If the joint committee does not reach an agreement, the same amount of spending would automatically be reduced across the board.

We did not find ourselves in this debt crisis overnight and, unfortunately, there is no single solution that will solve it immediately. Truly getting our fiscal house in order will be a long and difficult process, but the Budget Control Act was an important step toward changing the culture of spending in Washington. Congress has finally begun discussing spending in terms of how much less we'll spend – rather than how much more. I'm hopeful that this change in attitude toward spending will result in future positive steps towards getting Washington to live within our means. For evidence of the fact that we need to do much more, we need look no further than the recent downgrade in America's credit rating by Standard & Poor's. It is essential that we act quickly to reform our entitlements, the root cause of our debt crisis, before our economic future suffers more damage. The budget passed by the House of Representatives takes this

necessary action and I believe it is a good template for putting our nation back on solid financial footing.

Another key to solving our debt crisis is restoring economic growth. Congress must not ignore the plight of millions of Americans who are unable to find work. Now more than ever, we need a robust jobs agenda that will clear the way for American small businesses to invest in themselves and continue to serve as of the backbone of our economy. Historically, 80% of new jobs are created by small businesses. Unfortunately, they are currently struggling in the face of an uncertain tax future, new and burdensome government regulations, and a shaken confidence in the American economy. I have sponsored bills that would put an end to special interest [tax loopholes and subsidies](#) , free small business owners from the costs imposed by [g overnment-run health care](#) , and [roll back regulations](#) that threaten job creation.

As a small businessman, I know what it means to meet a payroll and to have to make the tough decisions to stay afloat during hard times. I continue to work here in Washington on your behalf to bring that common sense experience to the policy decisions that affect our nation's economic future. I welcome your input. We all must work together to put our nation back on the road to economic prosperity.

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Escalating Iran Threat Must Not Go Ignored

The “Arab Spring” in the Middle East and Northern Africa has dominated the foreign affairs headlines over the past several months, and understandably so. The widespread push for freedom and human rights is a remarkable development in a region beset with dictatorships and oppression. I am [concerned](#), however, that the intense focus on the Arab Spring has diverted the international community’s focus from the escalating threat posed by Iran.

I’m encouraged that the [sanctions](#) passed by Congress in 2010 have substantially reduced foreign investment into Iran’s economy, undermining their nuclear program. But the unfortunate reality is that the current sanctions scheme apparently is not enough to prevent Iran from marching toward the development of a nuclear weapon and a missile that can launch it. The Iranian threat is escalating and must not be ignored. I urge the Obama Administration to explicitly and repeatedly condemn Iran’s hostile activities and to keep this major challenge on the front burner of the international community. Because Iran’s nuclear program severely threatens U.S. troops and our national security, I also continue to believe the United States should keep all options on the table to prevent Iran from producing a nuclear weapon.

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Recent Past

House Passes Legislation to Allow Sale of Youth-Sized OHVs

I wanted to inform you that the House recently passed H.R. 2715, which would allow the sale of youth model OHVs that are currently banned under the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA). Previously, OHVs for youths were unfairly removed from the market by an overly strict interpretation of the CPSIA’s lead requirements. While these OHVs do have lead in areas like battery compartments, it is not found in locations where children could potentially ingest it. As such, these vehicles comply with the spirit of the rules and their removal from the marketplace was due to an unforeseen overreach of the original law. While I support common sense product safety regulations, I believe that we need to ensure that government regulation is not so overly restrictive as to interfere with the development of sensible products while not improving safety. I was glad to support this legislation that will finally allow young people in Northern California and across America to have access to OHVs. The Senate has also passed the legislation, and it now awaits the President’s signature.

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Northern California News and Events

Restoring Forest Management is Critical to Northern California Timber Counties

Recently I participated in a House Natural Resources Committee hearing on the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools program. This program was created with my support in 2000 to provide short-term support to forest counties after their timber receipts fell substantially when environmental regulations and lawsuits brought forest management to a virtual standstill. At the same time, it was supposed to create a pathway for getting common sense management back on our federal forests, restoring forest health and creating jobs for our local communities.

The Secure Rural Schools program has provided a critical funding bridge for our local counties and schools, but more than ten years later, timber harvests on federal forests still remain far below their historic average. The long-term solution rests, I believe, in restoring forest management and creating good paying jobs, which will in turn increase timber receipts to help stabilize local counties and schools. As the debate on reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools moves forward, I will continue to push for commonsense, balanced forest policies that will benefit Northern California.

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Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department Must Not Be Beholden to Special Interests

I wanted to let you know that I recently joined several other members of the House in writing a [letter](#) to members of the United States Senate expressing concerns about President Obama's nomination of Ms. Rebecca Wodder as Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior. Normally I do not feel the need to comment on agency nominees and I appreciate the unique role of the Senate in the confirmation process. Nonetheless, the policies previously advocated by this nominee would be so detrimental to jobs, our economy and the livelihood of rural Americans that I felt compelled to join other Members of Congress to make our views known.

This position is responsible for supervising the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and many federal conservation programs administered by the Department of Interior – all of which significantly affect the economy and property rights in rural Northern California. Ms. Wodder’s current position as the head of American Rivers, a Washington, DC-based national activist group that has repeatedly litigated against the federal government in favor of removing critical energy and flood control infrastructure, and her past work with the Wilderness Society raise serious concerns about a potential bias against multiple use and access that this nominee may bring to this important position.

As always, I will continue to do all I can in Washington to represent the needs and concerns of Northern California regarding land management policies and the protection of private property rights.

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